TRACTS FOR THESE TIMES

THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN - SECOND-GUESSING THE SAVIOR

Central to the justifications for the ordination of women in the Episcopal Church is the assertion that the social constraints of Christ's culture prevented Him from choosing a female apostle. Presumably we are now free to ordain women, since the society in which we live permits women an active role.

Proponents of this position assert that Christ was powerless to act against the behavioral norms of first century Jewry. Such an assertion is hardly compatible with the nature and mission of Christ, as revealed in the Scriptures. God did not become man in order to bind Himself to existing social mores — He came to make manifest His ways. He was concerned not with living as men thought He should live — but with teaching men how they should live.

Many of His teachings could be described as radical; many of His actions were unconventional. His conversation with the woman at the well (John 4: 10-26), for example, fell distinctly beyond the customary behavior patterns of His time. Jesus spoke often with women, discussed matters of importance with them.

Similarly, Christ fraternized with a class of individuals who were regarded as outcasts by His "peers". The Apostle Matthew was a tax collector, and, as such, had been subject to almost universal scorn — yet Our Lord called him. Christ chose those whom He wanted — not those whom His earthly society was conditioned to accept.

At the root of this issue is a problem which transcends the question of women's ordination. Somehow some of us have presumed to "second guess" the Savior. In our collective egotism we maintain that we know what Christ would have preferred to do — and we assume that He, the Son of God, was unable to do it! Surely our duty, and delight, in this life is to follow our Lord — not to "second guess" Him.

THE EVANGELICAL CATHOLIC MISSION
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